

CHINESE TYPE 56 SKS

The Chinese Type 56 SKS (also called the T 56) is a copy of the Soviet SKS SL carbine and may be identified by the presence of the Type 56 symbol located on the left side of the receiver. The Chinese Type 56 SKS functions identically to the Soviet SKS.

HISTORY

The SKS was designed by Sergei Gavrilovich Simonov after World War II. Simonov was born in 1894 and, after leaving elementary school, worked as a blacksmith and later still as a locksmith. In 1917, he worked with Federov in designing the very first Avtomat (not a misspelling!) rifles. After the 1917 Revolution, Simonov studied at the Moscow Polytechnic and became employed by the Tula Arsenal in 1924. Within two years he was in charge of quality control and a year later became an assistant to Federov in the design department. In the early 1930s Simonov designed the AVS-36, which went into service in 1936. This turned out to be the very first select fire rifle to be accepted by the fledgling Soviet Army. But, unfortunately, it failed to stand up under service life and was only in service for about two years.

In 1941 the Army adopted Simonov's PTRS 14.5mm antitank rifle. Few of these ever saw the light of day because they were too complex and heavy. The SKS was Simonov's last design and, because it was manufactured prior to the AK-47, it is the first rifle to be chambered for the Soviet 7.62x39mm round (designated the M43 cartridge).

Large numbers of the SKS were made but it is no longer an issue weapon to the Soviet Army. Nonetheless, the SKS is still used for ceremonial purposes in the USSR and has been manufactured by several Communist bloc nations; it is still in use in several of them. The East German version is designated the Karabiner-S. The Chinese People's Liberation Army copied the weapon at a time when China and the USSR were on friendlier terms and called the SKS the Type 56 SA (for semiautomatic) carbine. Later issued versions of the Type 56 SKS have a spiked bayonet while the earlier versions have a folding bayonet that is of the conventional shape. North Korean forces use the same weapon but call it a Type 63 carbine and have Type 63 stamped on the receiver. The Yugoslavian version is called the M59/66.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE 56 SKS

The SKS is an 8.51 pound (unloaded) gas operated, semiautomatic, shoulder fired rifle with a charger loaded 10 round integral box magazine located within the receiver. The bolt uses a tilting block method of locking. With the bayonet

folded, the overall length is just 40.20 inches and its four groove, right hand twist barrel is 20.51 inches in length. The muzzle velocity is approximately 2411 feet per second and the muzzle energy is about 1575 foot-pounds. The typical maximum firing rate for accurate shooting is one shot every 3 seconds or some 20 rounds per minute.

The maximum effective range is reported to be about 437 yards or 400 meters. The rear sight is a U shaped notch and the range is set by depressing the slide catch and moving the rear sight along its leaf track until the leading edge of the sight is lined up with the desired range value (in meters; there are 3.2808 feet to a meter). Additionally there is a battle sight setting for firing at ranges up to 300 meters. To adjust the elevation, rotate the front sight post with the spanner found in the cleaning kit. Rotating the front sight UP will LOWER the point of impact.

THEORY OF OPERATION OF THE TYPE 56 SKS

The safety lever is located along the rear of the trigger guard and is pushed forward and up for the SAFE position. The SAFE position therefore obstructs the trigger finger in the trigger guard as well as blocking the hammer.

When the safety lever is in the FIRE position, pulling the trigger will push a spring loaded sear block forward and will release the hammer. If the bolt is fully forward and locked, the hammer will pivot and impinge against the back side of the firing pin, driving the firing pin forward and into the cartridge's primer. The primer ignites the powder in the cartridge case and builds up pressure within the case, pushing the bullet into the barrel. As the bullet passes the gas port in the forward portion of the barrel, a portion of the gas is diverted into the front end of the gas tube. Pressure within the gas tube is used to drive the gas piston aft against the bolt carrier. This is a short stroke action and spring pressure is used to return the gas piston to its forward position.

As the bolt is driven rearward approximately 8mm (0.31 inches) of free travel, the gas pressure drops. The inertia of the rearward moving bolt now lifts up the rear end of the bolt out of its engaged position with the floor of the receiver. The bolt assembly then moves rearward along with the bolt carrier as one unit. The hammer is cocked as the bolt passes rearward over it. The bottom of the hammer forces the disconnecter down and the disconnecter pushes the trigger bar down below the sear. The sear spring will then force the sear under the hammer and over the trigger bar. This action holds the hammer down as the bolt passes over it. When the pulled trigger is released from its most rearward position in this cycle, pressure from the hammer spring resets the trigger to its normal forward position.

As the bolt moves rearward, the extractor on the bolt's face pulls the cartridge case out of the chamber. Once the cartridge case contacts the ejector, it is ejected out the right side of the receiver through the port.

The rearward movement of the bolt carrier causes the return spring to compress and, after the hammer is cocked, the tension in the compressed return spring drives the bolt assembly forward. The bolt picks up the top round in the magazine. The extractor on the bolt's face snaps onto the cannellure of the cartridge case. Further forward movement of the bolt assembly drives the cartridge into the chamber and the 8mm of free travel is traversed. Until the bolt is fully forward, the safety sear lever holds the hammer locked down. Final closure of the bolt carrier depresses the safety sear lever and the hammer is free to rotate forward again when the trigger is once again pulled. Final closure of the bolt carrier also again forces the bolt down into its recess within the receiver.

OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL SAFETY WARNING

SAFE WEAPON HANDLING REQUIRES THAT YOU, THE OPERATOR OF THE WEAPON, FOLLOW SPECIFIC SAFETY PROCEDURES. THE TYPE 56 SKS IS DEADLY! WHEN DISASSEMBLING THIS WEAPON, ALWAYS BE CERTAIN THAT THE SKS IS EMPTY, THE SAFETY IS "ON" AND NEVER POINT THIS WEAPON AT ANYTHING OR ANYONE YOU DO NOT INTEND TO KILL.

SAFETY DEPENDS ON YOU!

BARREL OBSTRUCTION WARNING

Before loading or firing the weapon, examine the barrel to be certain that it is clear and unobstructed. Firing the Type 56 SKS with any obstruction in the barrel - even a heavy coating of oil or even drops of water - may result in damage to the weapon and injury to the user or persons nearby. A misfire or unusual report on firing is always a signal to cease firing immediately and examine the chamber and bore. If there is any type of obstruction - even a partial obstruction - the user must clear the obstruction with a cleaning rod and bore brush before firing the Type 56 SKS.

MUZZLE SAFETY WARNING

Keep the muzzle of the SKS Type 56 rifle pointed in a safe direction at all times during the disassembly and assembly of this weapon.

WARNING

The SKS Type 56 rifle will fire when a live round is chambered, regardless of whether or not a magazine is open in the bottom of the rifle. Opening the magazine does not unload the SKS. To unload the SKS, FIRST OPEN THE MAGAZINE, THEN PULL THE OPERATING HANDLE FULLY TO THE REAR AND EJECT THE CARTRIDGE. DO NOT ASSUME THAT THE CHAMBER IS EMPTY; ALWAYS VISUALLY INSPECT THE CHAMBER EVERY TIME YOU HANDLE THE SKS. THE SAFETY SHOULD ALWAYS BE ON WHEN UNLOADING THE SKS TYPE 56 CARBINE.

1. Place the safety lever to the SAFE position.
2. Point the Type 56 SKS in a safe direction and pull aft on the magazine catch on the bottom of the weapon. This will open the bottom of the magazine and permit any cartridges within the magazine to fall clear of the weapon. Pull the operating handle fully to the rear and visually inspect the chamber to verify that there is no ammunition in the rifle.
3. If there were cartridges in the SKS, examine them to determine if they are damaged. If the cartridges are damaged, do not use them.
4. Load the SKS by placing a stripper clip loaded with 7.62x39mm ammunition into the charger on the upper side of the receiver at the rear of the magazine well. Push the 10 rounds down into the magazine well. You may also load the SKS by manually placing the cartridges into the magazine well one at a time until the desired amount of rounds is loaded into the magazine. The maximum capacity of the magazine is 10 rounds. If you do not have a stripper clip, then manually load the cartridges one at a time onto the top of the magazine follower and press each cartridge down into the magazine until it is full.
5. Pull the operating handle slightly aft and release it. The bolt will drive forward, stripping the top round in the magazine well off and placing it into the chamber. The SKS is now loaded and ready to fire, after the safety lever is placed to the FIRE position.
6. Set the rear sight for the desired range by depressing the rear sight slide catch on each side of the rear sight and moving the sight bar along the leaf until the front edge of the moveable sight bar is aligned with the line below the number that corresponds to the range in hundreds of meters. The rearmost character (3) on the sight leaf is a battle sight setting that is used in combat for shooting at ranges up to 300 meters.

7. To adjust for elevation, rotate the front sight post with the spanner found in the cleaning kit. Rotating the front sight UP will LOWER the point of impact.
8. To fire the Type 56 SKS, rotate the safety lever rearward until it is parallel to the trigger. This is the FIRE position of the safety lever. Point the SKS in a safe direction and gently squeeze the trigger. The SKS will fire if there are no malfunctions.
9. When the last round has been fired, the bolt will lock open to the rear, ready for you to reload the magazine and resume firing. Always place the safety lever to the SAFE position prior to reloading the Type 56 SKS.
10. The spike bayonet on the later Type 56 SKS rifles is attached to the mount below the barrel. To extend the bayonet, pull the serrated handle of the bayonet rearward until the detent on the bayonet handle clears the bayonet locking block. Then rotate the bayonet forward until the bayonet barrel loop approaches the end of the barrel. Finally, pull forward the bayonet handle against spring tension and swing the bayonet barrel loop over the end of the barrel, thereby locking the bayonet in its extended position. Retract the bayonet by reversing these steps.

DISASSEMBLY OF THE TYPE 56 SKS

1. Point the Type 56 SKS in a safe direction and assume the rifle is loaded.
2. Pull aft on the magazine catch on the bottom of the weapon. This will open the bottom of the magazine and permit any cartridges within the magazine to fall clear of the weapon. Pull the operating handle fully to the rear and visually inspect the chamber to verify that there is no ammunition in the weapon.
3. Allow the operating handle to move to its most forward position.
4. Engage the safety by moving the safety lever to the forward position.
5. Locate the receiver cover pin on the right rear side of the receiver. Hold the SKS with the muzzle pointing to the right. With the right hand on the receiver cover pin, rotate the receiver cover pin to the vertical position and pull it out of the receiver as far as it will go. It will not come out of the weapon. The receiver cover will pop slightly aft when the pin is pulled.

6. The receiver cover (also called the bolt cover) can now be pulled aft and removed from the receiver. Set the receiver cover aside.
7. Pull the return spring assembly aft from the rear of the bolt carrier until it clears the receiver. Set the return spring assembly aside.
8. Pull aft on the bolt carrier assembly with the operating handle until it is at its most rearward position and lift it clear of the receiver. Separate the bolt carrier from the bolt by sliding the bolt out either the left or right side of the bolt carrier. Set the bolt carrier and bolt aside.
9. Remove the gas tube and upper forearm assembly. Locate the gas tube lever latch on the right side of the weapon in front of the rear sight assembly. Rotate this lever upward as far as it will go. This rotates a cam that unlocks the upper forearm assembly. Lift the upper forearm assembly upward from the rear of the forearm until it is clear of the weapon. The piston will fall free of the gas cylinder tube from its front end. By continuing to rotate the gas tube lever latch upward, the receiver piston and its associated spring. Note that the receiver piston is under spring tension, so guard against the piston and spring violently ejecting from the SKS.
10. The trigger group may be removed by using a punch or the point of a bullet. Turn the weapon over so the trigger side of the SKS is facing upwards. Just behind the trigger guard and on the bottom of the receiver is a plunger. Press into the Type 56 SKS with a bullet or punch against this plunger. This will release the trigger assembly. When released, the trigger assembly may be lifted out of the stock by the rear portion of the trigger guard and pivoted toward the muzzle end of the SKS. Set the trigger assembly aside and do not disassemble the trigger group.
11. Once the trigger group has been removed, the stock may be separated from the receiver and barrel assembly. Pull on the aft end of portion of the magazine well housed in the stock (the portion that does not hang out of the SKS). The magazine well assembly will now separate from the weapon. Set the magazine well assembly aside.
12. Before you attempt to separate the receiver-barrel assembly from the stock, you must first remove the cleaning rod from beneath the barrel. Then lift the receiver-barrel assembly out of the upper portion of the stock. This completes the disassembly of the Type 56 SKS.

INSPECTION AFTER DISASSEMBLY

1. Visually inspect all parts for obvious damage. Should damage to any part become apparent, reassemble the Type 56 SKS and take it to your dealer for repair. Do not attempt repairs yourself. Repairs should only be performed by a qualified armorer.
2. Inspect the external surfaces for the proper finish. The surfaces should be blued. If needed, have the surfaces parkerized or refinished with a satinized blue finish that is not reflective.

CLEANING THE TYPE 56 SKS

1. Gather together the proper sized cleaning rod with a .30 caliber brass or bronze bristle bore brush and a slotted tip into which a cleaning patch can be inserted. Also needed are clean cloth patches and clean soft cloths.
2. Do not use stainless steel brushes on the Type 56 SKS. Stainless steel brushes will remove the finish on this weapon. A bronze or brass "toothbrush" is especially helpful for scrubbing parts. Do not use the bore brush for scrubbing anything except the barrel.
3. Combat Arms and the United States military recommend that you use Break-Free (CLP)™. Under no circumstances should you ever use WD-40™ on any weapon! If you need a solvent, Combat Arms recommends that you use Shooter's Choice™ followed by CLP. The SKS should be cleaned at least every 400 rounds and after each firing period. Be aware that very often surplus 7.62x39mm ammunition is Berdan primed and slightly corrosive. Also, PMC ammunition is reloadable and noncorrosive.
4. The end cap of the cleaning kit will mount on the muzzle and serve as a cleaning rod guide. Mount the patch tip from the cleaning kit onto the end of the cleaning rod. Tighten it using the socket styled opening on the end of the cleaning kit housing. Using a cleaning rod with a slotted tip, run a CLP wetted patch through the full length of the barrel from the chamber end several times to remove loose material. Then attach a bronze or brass bristle bore brush to the cleaning rod and wet it in CLP. Run the bore brush back and forth through the full length of the barrel at least a dozen times. Make sure that the rod is pushed all the way through the barrel until the entire bore brush clears the muzzle end. Do not reverse the direction of the brush until it has completely exited from the muzzle end of the barrel or the bore brush may bind up inside the barrel.

5. Using the toothbrush soaked in CLP, scrub the area around the chamber until it is clean. Remove the bore brush from the cleaning rod and attach the slotted tip again. Run several dry patches through the barrel until they come out clean. If necessary, attach the bore brush to the cleaning rod again and scrub the barrel with a CLP soaked bore brush. Continue the process until the barrel is clean. Rinse the areas you scrubbed down with Gun ScrubberTM. If an area is particularly dirty, it is often best to direct the Gun Scrubber to it first, then scrub the area with a toothbrush dipped in Shooter's Choice and follow up with a the light coating of CLP.
6. Failing to do this type of cleaning consistently and properly will cause fouling of the barrel with a natural loss of accuracy. Grease accumulation in the chamber area can interfere with the proper feeding of cartridges from the magazine.
7. Using a loose clean patch or soft rag soaked with CLP or Shooter's Choice, remove all powder residue from all components of the mechanism. If grease or dirt cannot be removed by merely wiping with the patch, then use your brass toothbrush soaked with CLP or first apply the Gun Scrubber to the area. After using the brass toothbrush, wipe all of the scrubbed areas with a clean CLP wetted patch. After cleaning the bore, run a clean dry patch through the barrel and then follow it with a patch that has a light coat of CLP on it. This will put a light coat of CLP on the inside of the barrel and protect it from corrosion.
8. Wipe all surfaces with a clean cloth that has a light coat of CLP on it. If the lower receiver and its mechanism is especially dirty, flood it with CLP, leave it sit soaking for 2 hours and then flush it out with more CLP. Remove the wood stock before soaking or flushing the SKS and make certain that all foreign matter is removed after cleaning. Lightly lubricate the lower receiver with CLP.
9. When cleaning the bolt face, breech areas, etc. with the toothbrush, work carefully so as not to damage components.
10. Reassemble the SKS as detailed later in this manual. If the SKS is to be stored for an extended period, the final wiping should be done with a heavier coat of CLP.
11. Only a very small amount of CLP is needed to provide adequate lubrication of all moving parts in the SKS and to prevent rust. Accumulation of CLP can attract particles of dust and dirt which can interfere with the safe and

reliable function of the weapon. Do not, therefore, apply excess CLP unless storing the SKS for an extended period of time. If storing the weapon and using a heavy coating of CLP, the SKS should be disassembled and re-cleaned and properly lubricated with a light coating of CLP before firing.

STORAGE WARNING

If the SKS has been stored, before firing it again, completely disassemble it as detailed elsewhere in this manual, remove all grease and lubricant, apply a light coating of CLP to all parts as described in the section on cleaning and be sure to run a dry patch through the barrel after cleaning with a bore brush soaked in CLP. Do not keep the weapon stored in a leather holster or case. Leather attracts moisture, even though the holster or case may appear to be perfectly dry. Never store the Type 56 rifle in such a manner as it may be dislodged. Always store the SKS securely and unloaded. Run a dry patch through the barrel before firing the SKS to remove any oil or foreign matter.

LUBRICATION WARNING

Firing the Type 56 SKS with oil, grease or any other material even partially obstructing the barrel may result in damage to the weapon and death or injury to the user and those persons nearby. Never spray or apply any lubricants directly to the ammunition. If the powder charge of a cartridge is affected by the lubricant, it is possible that the charge will not ignite but the energy from the primer in the cartridge case may be sufficient to push the bullet into the barrel where it may be lodged. Firing a subsequent bullet into the obstructed barrel may damage the weapon and cause death or injury to the user and persons nearby. Use all lubricants properly and according to the lubricant manufacturer's suggestions and recommendations.

REASSEMBLY OF THE TYPE 56 SKS

1. Attach the stock to the receiver-barrel assembly by inserting the nose of the stock into the barrel attachment about half way down the barrel. Once the nose is properly inserted, gently push the receiver barrel assembly into the stock.
2. Reinsert the magazine well assembly. There are two major parts to the magazine well assembly. There is the portion that remains within the stock and the portion that covers the bottom of the magazine well and may be swung open by the operator to remove the cartridges within the magazine well. The front part of the portion of the magazine well assembly that remains within the stock has a lip that must fit into a lip on the bottom of the barrel.

This is often easier to see with the stock removed and then mating the two parts together. Once the magazine well's forward lip is in place, the main portion of the well will snap into the receiver. If it is taking you any force to accomplish this, you are doing something wrong. You either did not marry up the lip of the magazine well to the lip beneath the barrel or you do not have the portion of the magazine well that resides in the stock properly aligned. Do not use force!

3. Next reinstall the trigger assembly. Be certain the safety is set to the SAFE position before attempting the installation. This is because the back of the safety lever has a cam that rides over the trigger assembly release plunger and this cam must be out of the way for installation. The only way to have the cam out of the way is to move the safety lever to the SAFE position. At the lower forward end of the trigger assembly is a roll pin that is placed crosswise (transverse) to the trigger assembly. This transverse pin slips into a slot just behind the magazine in the receiver. Before reinstalling the trigger assembly, look inside the area that houses the trigger assembly and, below the slot in the receiver where the transverse pin sits, you will see an oval shaped hole in the receiver. Through this hole will go the safety sear lever of the trigger assembly. Set the trigger assembly into the receiver so the transverse pin slips into its slot in the receiver and the safety sear lever will slide easily into its oval hole. You must now latch the trigger assembly to the receiver. This can be a bit tricky on new SKS rifles. Set the weapon on the work surface trigger side up and press down on the trigger guard. At the rear of the trigger guard you can see the trigger assembly release plunger sliding to its locked position. On newer SKS rifles, it helps to also press down on the area just to the rear of the plunger. Be patient. Believe it or not, this does not require a great deal of force. Close the magazine well cover on the bottom of the weapon and secure it by pulling aft on the magazine catch, holding the magazine well cover in place and then releasing the magazine catch.
4. Reinstall the gas tube and upper forearm assembly. Put the gas piston back in the gas tube with the piston end towards the muzzle end of the tube and slide the piston shaft down into the gas tube. Make sure the shaft does not extend on the back of the gas tube. Visually check that the gas tube release pin at the front end of the rear sight assembly is rotated so that the flat side of the pin is forward. Slip the front end of the gas tube over the gas port exit flange (located on the top of the barrel about half way between the front sight assembly and the leading edge of the stock) and lower the upper handguard down onto the barrel. Lower the gas release lever with finger pressure to its lowest position to secure the assembly.

5. Join the bolt carrier and bolt assembly together. The front end of the bolt carrier has the cutout on it for inserting the stripper clips. On the bottom of the bolt carrier, about 1¼ inches from the rear end of the unit is a notched area that accepts the rear end of the bolt itself. Set the bolt carrier aside and examine the bolt. The bolt face is on the front end of the bolt and the top side of the bolt shows the firing pin. At the rear of the top side of the bolt is a hook like cutout. The hook portion fits into the notch on the rear underside of the bolt carrier. Turn the bolt carrier over so the bottom is exposed and set the bolt in (upside down) so the hook of the bolt marries into the notch of the bolt carrier. Notice the front end of the bolt may now be lifted slight and bolt remains attached to the carrier by virtue of the hook and notch.
6. Next install the bolt carrier and bolt (now called the bolt carrier assembly, since they are joined together) into the receiver. Set the bolt carrier assembly into the rear portion of the receiver so that the operating handle is on the left side of the SKS. Note that there are slots cut into either side of the bolt carrier itself. These slots fit over the rails of the receiver and allow the carrier to slide forward and aft in the receiver. Push the bolt carrier assembly forward onto the rails until further forward movement is stopped by the magazine follower. Then depress the magazine follower slightly and slide the bolt carrier assembly the rest of the way forward until it is at its extreme forward position. You will hear a click as the bolt carrier assembly locks into place.
7. Reinsert the return spring assembly (spring and guide rod) into the back of the bolt carrier. There is no front or back end of the return spring assembly as such, so insert either end into the back of the bolt carrier. This will leave the rear of the return spring assembly about even with the rear of the receiver.
8. Reinstall the receiver cover. First locate the receiver cover pin lever on the right rear side of the receiver. Position the lever of the receiver cover pin pointing upwards. Slide the receiver cover onto the receiver. The inside rear of the receiver cover will press against the rear of the return spring assembly. Push the receiver cover as far forward as it will go against the tension of the return spring. This is necessary to align the holes in the receiver with the hole in the receiver cover. When these holes are aligned, push the receiver cover pin in from the right side until the left side of the pin is flush with the left side of the receiver cover. When it is, rotate the receiver cover pin lever forward until it is lock. This completes the reassembly of the Type 56 SKS.

TYPE 56 SKS SAFETY AND FUNCTION CHECK

1. This procedure assumes that you have just completed the reassembly of the SKS and that there is no ammunition in the chamber or magazine. If there is, remove it now.
2. Place the safety lever to the FIRE position.
3. Pull the operating handle aft sharply as far as it will go. When released, the bolt carrier should go forward slightly and stop as it is being help open by the magazine follower (check of the last round hold open capability).
4. Pull aft on the operating handle and hold it while depressing the magazine follower. Ease the bolt forward over the aft end of the follower. Remove the finger that is depressing the follower and when clear, release the operating handle. The bolt should slam forward and lock.
5. Point the weapon in a safe direction. Place the safety lever to the SAFE position and pull the trigger. The safety is working properly if the weapon will not fire. Rotate the safety lever now to the FIRE position and, with the SKS empty and pointing in a safe direction, pull the trigger to dry fire the weapon. The hammer should be released and the appropriate noise of the dry firing heard.
6. This completes the safety and functioning test. If the SKS failed to perform any of these checks, it should be disassembled and examined carefully for broken or damaged parts.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

SOVIET BLOC SKS CARBINE



Specifications:

Weapon nomenclature - Samozariadnyia Karabina Simonova (SKS)

System of operation - Gas, Semi-automatic fire only

Bolt type - one-piece, tipping, rear-cocking

Weight (loaded) - 8.8 lbs.

Length, barrel - 20.34 inches

Length, overall - 40.16 inches

Feed device - 10-round, fixed, staggered double-row box magazine

Sights, front - Hooded post

Sights, rear - Tangent leaf, graduated from 100 to 1000 meters

Cartridge - 7.62 x 39 Soviet M43 (Type PS ball)

Muzzle velocity - 2411 fps

Bullet weight - 122 gr.

Working pressure - 45,000 psi

Bore diameter - .301 inches

Groove diameter - .311 inches

Direction & rate of rifling twist - Right, 1 turn in 9.45 inches

Design History:

The SKS was adopted by the Soviet Union in 1946, and is the basis for the later AK series of weapons. It is a gas-operated, semi-automatic rifle and might be referred to as a miniature version of the 14.5mm PTRS semi-automatic antitank rifle used during World War 2. Both the SKS and the PTRS were designed by the famed Russian arms inventor Sergei Simonov. Because of its light recoil and moderate weight, 35 rounds per minute of aimed fire can be achieved.

Unlike its predecessor, the Tokarev, the SKS features an instantly dismountable gas system. The gas cylinder is an integral part of the handguard and contains the piston rod. The front end of the combined gas cylinder and handguard fits over a gas port housing pinned to the barrel approximately 7 inches from the muzzle. The rear end butts against the rear sight base which contains the tappet rod and tappet rod return spring. The latch

located on the right side of the sight serves to lock the handguard-gas cylinder into place. Its removal for field maintenance takes less than three seconds.

In the 1950's, Soviet technical advisors helped the Chinese government to establish several factories to produce the SKS carbine. The first Chinese SKS carbines were identical to their Soviet counterparts, and were adopted by the Peoples Republic of China as the Type 56 carbine. Subsequently, the Chinese have manufactured several varieties of the original SKS, including selective-fire models, short-barreled "paratrooper" models, and models which use the detachable magazine of the later AK-47 assault rifle.

As the general availability of the AK-47 improved in the early 1960's, the SKS was relegated to the category of a secondary military arm in both the USSR and in the PRC. However, stockpiles of millions of SKS carbines are maintained for the "Peoples Militias" (strategic reserve) and for export to the third world countries as "military aid".

Operation:

When the rifle is fired, gas enters the gas port housing under pressure to thrust the piston rod back against the short tappet rod. In moving back, the tappet rod slides through a hole in the rear sight base and a corresponding one in the top of the receiver to strike the bolt carrier.

The claw-like arrangement of the bolt carrier cams the rear end of the bolt upward, unlocking it completely after 7/16" of rearward travel. The kinetic energy imparted to the bolt carrier upon being struck by the tappet rod is sufficient to cause the bolt and bolt carrier to travel together 3 7/8" rearward to extract and eject the fired case and to compress the recoil spring.

The compressed recoil spring forces the bolt and carrier forward to strip a cartridge from the magazine and chamber it. The camming surfaces within the bolt carrier force the rear end of the bolt down into the locked position. When locked, the lower rear end of the bolt butts against a hardened steel crosspiece set within the receiver.

Description:

SKS carbines have been fitted with two different styles of bayonet. The earlier type is 9" in length and resembles a knife blade. The later type is 12" long, and is needle shaped. Both types are attached to the barrel and fold back under the barrel when not in use. The stock and handguard of the Soviet and Eastern bloc carbines are made of laminated beechwood with a hard, waterproof, clear lacquer finish. Chinese-made SKS carbines are usually found with stocks and handguards made of a porous Asian hardwood resembling teakwood, and brushed with an orange colored shellac-type finish. The Chinese SKS is sometimes fitted with a synthetic plastic resin stock and handguard which is molded in a reddish-brown color.

The buttstock of all versions is hollowed out to receive a cleaning kit contained in a steel capsule. The body of the capsule also serves as a handle for the cleaning rod and its lid fastens over the muzzle to protect the rifle during cleaning. Inside the capsule is a bore brush, a cleaning rod extension, and a tool to clear carbon fowling from the gas port. The

capsule lid can also serve as a blank firing device, if properly locked onto the front sight base.

The magazine is unusual and consists of a stamped and welded sheet metal housing, stamped sheet metal floor cap, and a sheet metal follower. Both the follower arm and the floor cap are hinged to the forward end of the magazine body. A coil spring set at the hinge point furnishes sufficient pressure to the follower arm to insure the feeding of cartridges.

The weapon is loaded from above with ten-round stripper clips for which a guide groove has been provided in the forward face of the bolt carrier. It is important to exert thumb pressure against the cartridges as close to the clip as possible, since pressure applied elsewhere makes it difficult to strip the last three rounds. The stripper clip is a one-piece, spring steel stamping - very sturdy and efficient. The magazine can also be loaded with single rounds.

Field Stripping:

To unload the weapon for field stripping, rapid emptying of the magazine is accomplished by holding one hand under the floor cap to catch the loaded rounds as the other hand pulls back the magazine latch. After clearing the chamber and detaching the sling, swing the latch on the right side of the rear sight upward to the first stop.

The gas cylinder-handguard can be removed by lifting up at the rear and withdrawing it from its forward contact with the gas port housing. By swinging the latch up to its second stop, the plunger and spring can be released easily, but maintain thumb pressure against the tappet rod to prevent it from being expelled by the tappet rod spring.

NEVER, under any circumstances, attempt to fire this weapon with the handguard-gas cylinder removed, or with a defective handguard latch! The gas port is angled to point directly toward the shooters face and severe injury will result from high pressure gas and flame. The handguard-gas cylinder must be firmly latched in place before firing.

To dismantle the bolt assembly, lower the bolt on the cleared chamber leaving the hammer cocked, and locate the latch on the right rear of the receiver. Rotate this latch until it is upright and pull it out as far as possible. Remove the receiver cover by lifting it and pulling it to the rear. The recoil spring is removed by drawing it rearward out of the bolt carrier. By pulling the charging handle to the rear and upward, the bolt and bolt carrier will be freed from the receiver.

To remove the trigger group, push the safety lever into the "safe" position. Insert the bullet point of a loaded round in the pocket of the spring catch located directly behind the triggerguard and push forward. The trigger group will become unfastened and jump outward, pushed by a coil spring set into the stock beneath the triggerguard.

Swing the trigger group downward and back to remove. Pull the magazine group down and to the rear to release it. Pull the handle of the bayonet towards the blade to unlatch it. Remove the cleaning rod by flexing it slightly to release it from its slot beneath the front

sight. Pivot the bayonet until it locks in the extended position. Grasp the receiver cover latch pin, and use it to lift the receiver up and out of the stock.

By reversing these steps, the weapon can be reassembled. However, the following precautions must be observed. Reseat the fore-end of the stock properly within the barrel band. When replacing the magazine, its forward end must engage the lug extending from the rear sight beneath the barrel.

Hinge the magazine cap upward and hold it in this position while guiding the projecting pins of the trigger group into the receiver lug. Apply pressure to the bottom of the triggerguard; if the trigger group does not lock into place, brace the carbine with one hand and deliver a sharp blow to the triggerguard to insure proper seating. Before installing the trigger group, the hammer must be in the cocked position, and the safety must be engaged.

Ammunition:

Surplus military ammunition from Com Bloc nations is currently banned from importation. Some ammunition imported before this ban is still available. Winchester (USA) and Remington (UMC) supply military ball type ammo in 7.62x39 which is superior to Com Bloc ball. Trajectory data supplied here is generic and presumes a maximum point blank range (bullet remains within 6 inches of line of sight) of 300 yards:

Distance (yards)	25	100	200	300	400	500
Trajectory (inches)	.7	4.7	2.1	-6.1	-26.6	-60

As can be seen from the table, bullet drop makes obtaining hits with the 7.62x39 at ranges beyond 350 yards increasingly difficult. Energy loss also limits effective range.

Identifying Soviet Bloc 7.62 x 39 ammunition:

Designation	Bullet Type	Marking	Round Weight
PS	Ball	none	256.8 gr.
T-45	Tracer	Green	240.7 gr.
Z	Tracer-Incendiary	Red	239.8 gr.
BZ	AP Incendiary	Black & Red	251.5 gr.
